



Governor's Tourism Advisory Board Meeting Minutes

Thursday June 29, 2023, 8:30 AM to 12:00 PM

Aberdeen Capitol Theatre

415 S Main St, Aberdeen SD 57401

Board Members

Ann Lesch

Julie Ranum

Carmen Schramm

Kristie Wagner

Frank Smith

Ivan Sorbel

John Brockelsby

Other Guests

Kasi Haberman-SESD Tourism Assoc

Casey Weismantel-Aberdeen CVB

Dawn Thorstenson-Storybook Land

Mike Grave-Lewis & Clark Resort

William Collingnon-GFP Regional

Supervisor

Alicia Tonsfeldt- Fort Sisseton Historic State
Park

Mike Grave-Lewis & Clark Resort

Adelaide Simpson-Love Communications

Haydn Nelson-Love Communications

Campbell Levy-Lou Hammond Group

Camille King- Karsh Hagen

Lauren Corna- Karsh Hagan

Tourism Staff

Jim Hagen

Wanda Goodman

Cole Irwin

Kirk Hulstein

Katlyn Svendsen

Mike Gussiaas

Bailey Carlsen

Hallie Getz

Calvin Bloemendaal

Jacey Ellsworth

Teresa Tople

President Carmen Schramm called the meeting to order and welcomed everyone

Secretary Hagen welcomed the board and attendees to his hometown of Aberdeen. He thanked Aberdeen CVB Director Casey Weismantel and his team for their hard work in helping put together the meeting.

Secretary Hagen shared that the agenda would be modified a bit (the breakout & brainstorming slated for 10:50 AM) as several board members could not make the meeting, but we would add it to the agenda for the next board meeting in September. He also shared that we would take a deeper dive into the department's marketing work today, but board members and other attendees should feel free to ask questions on any topic.

Casey Weismantel – Aberdeen CVB

- Warm welcome to Aberdeen
- Aberdeen has become a destination – a family destination
- People come to Aberdeen for sports, hunting, reunions, Storybook Land, etc.
- May was slow but June has been good

President Schramm asked each board member to give a brief report from their area.

Ann Lesch – Ingalls Homestead, DeSmet

- May was busy then tapered down and now picking up again
- Home school students are good in May, need to look at getting them there in September
- Camping is good, RV numbers are down, they are booking last minute
- Laura Ingalls Wilder Pageant starts the first weekend in July

Frank Smith – Gettysburg

- Didn't look good starting out with all the rain, the water is high
- Fishing was good in June, not sure how the summer will end but looks good for now
- GFP are stocking 3.1 fingerling Walleye in the reservoir

Carmen Schramm – Yankton

- One high-end restaurant opened and so did the Fairfield Inn
- 9% increase in visitation and 5% in camping, summer looks strong
- Yankton Mall is under new ownership
- The Ice Cream Shop is a popular stop

Julie Ranum – Watertown

- Redlin Arts numbers are up for visitors, but sales are down
- Travelers appreciate the interaction with other tourists and SD hospitality
- Tour buses are up from places that haven't visited SD before
- Travelers taking the back roads are finding hidden gems like the Redlin Center

Ivan Sorbel – Pine Ridge

- Pine Ridge is open
- The Visitor Center and the college are also open
- The Village has 56 bus tours booked with Collette Tours
- Many calls and emails inquiring about things to do in Pine Ridge

John Brockelsby – Rapid City/Reptile Gardens

- Business has spikes then declines in attendance
- June is trending down in numbers
- Huge spikes in numbers in 2021 this is more like a normal year

Kristie Wagner - Dakota Resources/Whitewood

- Slow start this summer
- Numbers are down but trending back to normal.
- Visitors are realizing new places to visit in SD
- Different routes are being taken in SD to get to their destinations.
- More people are coming back for repeat visits.

Kirk Hulstein, Calvin Bloemendaal, and Bailey Carlsen, Industry Outreach and Development Team

- Total visitation is down 3% and spending is up 5%. To put in context though, we are well over 2019 results for both indicators. Inflation should also be factored for the spending increase as we are around 4-5% CYTD.
- We are watching ADR's closely showing a large increase across the state for hotel rates while demand and occupancy both showing declines.
- Park Visitation was greatly impacted by cold spring temps and late snowstorms in April.
- Excitement to travel is at an all-time high
- Consumers are experience sticker shock and the majority cited hotel rates followed by airline fares as the reason
- Booking windows continue to shrink and now at less than a month
- We continue to monitor our new forecast model and has been reporting accurately the past month.

Mike Gussiaas, Lauren Corna and Camille King, Karsh Hagan Global Marketing and Brand Strategy

- The team shared eight campaigns currently running as of June and July, with the additional campaigns that came online since the Board met in April. The efforts include National, Peak Regional, Arts & Culture, Native American, "Forever 605" Stewardship, Sturgis "O-G H-D" co-op, Workforce and the Travel South Dakota x Game, Fish and Parks "Hunt the Greatest" campaign.

- The “Forever 605” Stewardship campaign launched on 6/05 and has a lot of momentum behind it.
 - Feedback from a mid-June webinar had engagement unlike the team has experienced with previous webinars.
 - In two weeks, the campaign saw 2,405+ Forever 605 Pledge signups.
 - 3,440+ hotel and flight bookings could already be attributed to what was intended to be an awareness campaign in the short time frame it’s been live.
 - Plans are already in the works for a more robust toolkit and the continued rollout of the campaign over the coming months and years.
- Responding to a concern from Sturgis Rally-related businesses regarding a new event in Milwaukee, the department worked with a group of partners to launch the new Sturgis “O-G H-D” Rally campaign. The campaign provides an opportunity to work with partners the department typically doesn’t co-op with and to dedicate more advertising dollars over the next two-three years to promoting the Rally.
- Outside of the new campaigns, the team is prioritizing video and photo shoots to provide our new agencies and efforts with updated assets that fit our updated brand look and feel. The team shared assets from a recent shoot focused on water activities from the Yankton area and discussed upcoming shoots for the summer and fall in Deadwood (Gaming, Western and Lifestyle), Sturgis (Rally), the Black Hills (outdoor rec-focused), and Sioux Falls/Brookings.
 - Also shared in a discussion of asset needs were the department's additional internal efforts plus a partnership with 605 Magazine that focuses more on events and various business/lifestyle elements for our database and use in fulfillment and co-op efforts.
- The team shared creative and an update on the new Arts campaign. To date, the campaign has proven effective. After nearly a month live, the department saw a hotel + flight booking rate more than double the average rate of all the department’s marketing efforts during that time.
- The dedicated Native American campaign also launched in June. Like the other new niche efforts, it has also seen great viewer engagement. The team shared creative and that this campaign has a rate of bookings attributed to it that is nearly seven times that of the department’s average.
- Next up for the department is the rolling launch of their pheasant hunting co-op in partnership with Game, Fish and Parks. The “Hunt the Greatest” campaign is entering its fourth year. It will run in 15 states over eight months, generating an estimated 12M+ in impressions.
 - With the new brand, this campaign is was updated by Karsh Hagan to align. The team shared the new creative direction utilizing new assets from a video and photo shoot from November 2022. The new assets prominently feature female hunters for use in the department’s ongoing efforts to target a growing female hunting audience.
 - Also shared was an exciting new partnership between On X Hunt, Pheasants Forever and the state partners. The partnership is the first of its kind for On X Hunt and will benefit habitat and help increase public hunting lands in the state.
 - The co-op will utilize a series of new partnerships with well-established and well-respected brands and publishers in the upcoming media calendar.
 - Also shared by the presenters was that Karsh Hagan likely has done the same amount.
- Peak Regional and National campaigns are live in full, and the team shared updated creative and shots of creative in-market, including:
 - The US Outside episode w/ L Renee Blount
 - Megyn Kelly sharing her South Dakota experience on her podcast and YouTube channel
 - Out-of-Home in Denver International Airport and Minneapolis-St Paul International Airport and the billboard extension in the Dallas market

- The Undertone rich media unit that the vendor's research and insights scored in the top 1% of its national and international ads measured.
- The Music Row Happy Hour Pandora added-value event sponsorship
- Print ads in National Geographic, Outside and SD Magazine
- :30 couples and :30 family spots running on OTT TV (Hulu, Paramount+, Disney+), online, YouTube and targeted cable

Dawn Thorstenson- Storybook Land

- Everything is free at Storybook Land! Storybook Land is the Disneyland of SD
- People are coming to Storybook Land as a destination
- 300,000 visitors per year
- New ride coming by May 2024
- South Dakota's first sensory slide and roller slide
- Updating the Jack and Jill slide to make it a sensory slide also
- Free music with local artists, people come to watch the artists and end up staying in the park
- Campground is slow but slowly gaining
- Cabins are being replaced and are being built by high school shop students, adding full showers and bathrooms to the cabins
- One of the top city parks in the nation, donations reach \$2,000 a week

William Collingnon – Game, Fish and Parks

- Game, Fish and Parks has a new reservation system
- Numbers are where they should be – looking strong
- Campers are making reservations a bit later than normal
- Updates coming to Lake Mina and Lake Brandt

Alicia Tonsfeldt – Fort Sisseton Historic State Park

- Hosting 150-160 events per year
- Doing outreach to children at schools to encourage them and their families to visit
- Ghost investigations
- Escape room using the history
- History tours
- Updating the exhibits and building at Fort Sisseton to what it used to look like
- GF&P runs all the rentals

Secretary Hagen

Secretary Hagen thanked the board for a robust and lively discussion on many topics. He shared how excited they were about the tours planned for the afternoon and the Aqua Addicts Show that evening. The secretary reminded attendees of the next board meeting in Huron, September 6 & 7.

Meeting adjourned around 3:30 PM.